Amendments to Claims

Claim 1 (Currently amended) A method of heating a fuel cell ~~from an initial temperature to a desired temperature higher than the initial temperature~~, wherein the fuel cell comprises an anode comprising an anode flow field plate, an anode diffusion layer and an anode catalyst layer, a cathode comprising a cathode flow field plate, a cathode diffusion layer and a cathode catalyst layer, and a proton conductive membrane, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) operating the fuel cell at an open circuit state, wherein the fuel cell is at an initial temperature;

(b) feeding at a fuel feed rate an aqueous fuel solution to the anode and feeding at an oxidant feed rate an oxidant to the cathode;

(c) allowing fuel in the fuel solution to diffuse through the proton conductive membrane from the anode to the cathode; ~~and~~

(d) oxidizing the fuel at the cathode to generate heat, thereby heating the fuel cell to an intermediate temperature above the initial temperature;~~between the initial temperature and the desired temperature; and.~~

(e) varying the oxidant feed rate so as to control the heating of the fuel cell; and

(ef) connecting an external circuit to the fuel cell thereby ceasing to operate the fuel cell in the open circuit ~~state before the intermediate temperature equals the desired temperature~~.

Claim 2 (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the fuel is methanol.

Claim 3 (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the fuel solution has a concentration of methanol that is the same as or greater than a second concentration of methanol when the fuel cell is operated under normal conditions.

Claim 4 (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the concentration of methanol is in the range of from 0.5 to 25 wt.%.

Claim 5 (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the concentration of methanol is at least 40

wt% when the initial temperature is less than –40oC.

Claim 6 (Cancelled)

Claim 7 (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of varying the fuel feed rate so as to control the heating of the fuel cell.

Claim 8 (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the fuel solution is fed from a fuel reservoir and the method further comprising the step of recycling the aqueous fuel solution back to the fuel reservoir.

Claim 9 (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of controlling temperature of the fuel solution fed to the anode.

Claim 10 (Previously amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the initial temperature is below the freezing point of water and the intermediate temperature is above the freezing point of water.

Claim 11 (Original) The method of claim 1 comprising a plurality of fuel cells arranged in a fuel cell stack.

Claim 12 (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the fuel is methanol.

Claim 13 (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the fuel solution has a concentration of methanol that is the same as or greater than a second concentration of methanol when the fuel cell is operated under normal conditions.

Claim 14 (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the concentration of methanol is in the range of from 0.5 to 25 wt.%.

Claim 15 (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the concentration of methanol is at least 40 wt% when the initial temperature is less than –40oC.

Claim 16 (Cancelled)

Claim 17 (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of varying the fuel feed rate so as to control the heating of the fuel cell.

Claim 18 (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the fuel solution is fed from a fuel

reservoir and the method further comprising the step of recycling the aqueous fuel solution back to the fuel reservoir.

Claim 19 (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of controlling temperature of the fuel solution fed to the anode.

Claim 20 (Previously presented) The method of claim 11 wherein the initial temperature is below the freezing point of water and the intermediate temperature is above the freezing point of water.